

November 14, 2016

USDA, Forest Service

Sumter National Forest

Andrew Pickens Ranger District

Mountain Rest, SC 29664

Mr. Robert Sitzler,

Re: Proposed commercial fishing permits

I am opposed to any commercial use of the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River on any sections above highway 28.

During the recent public involvement process relating to boating access to the upper Chattooga the Forest Service stated that the river was at or near its carrying capacity; therefore it would not be feasible to add commercial use. Also, because the Forest Service does not have data regarding the total recreational use on the upper Chattooga, including numbers of hikers, campers, birdwatchers, and fishermen it would not be prudent to add commercial use without doing extensive studies, including a comprehensive environmental assessment.

The Chattooga fishery is a "put and take" artificial fishery mainly composed of introduced exotic species such as brown and rainbow trout, which is not good for the river ecosystem and not fit to be part of a Wild and Scenic River fishery, which stresses biodiversity and protection for native vertebrate species.

The heart of the controversy concerning boating on the upper Chattooga was the fear of "conflicts" between user groups; is it your intention to cause user conflicts by increasing use and adding commercial use? If "conflicts" were an issue three years ago why are they no longer an issue? How many fishermen use the upper Chattooga in a year, specifically?

Sincerely,



Bruce Hare

177 River Vista Rd

Franklin, NC 28734

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Ranger  
AS